Anthony van Dyck's study of Italian art and Rubens' painting continued throughout his first Antwerp period. It was after van Dyck was enrolled as a master in the Guild of St. Luke in 1618 that he seems to have officially assisted Rubens. The two worked together, not as master and pupil but as colleagues whose mutual admiration was intense. Van Dyck used many of Rubens' sketches as inspiration for his own compositions. Rubens employed van Dyck to help in the execution of a series of tapestry cartoons for the History of Decius Mus and in the production of several large canvases for the decoration of the Jesuit Church in Antwerp. When Rubens died, several of the paintings in his collection by van Dyck were those that the younger artist had produced during the period in which the two worked together.

It was probably Rubens who advised van Dyck to go to England in the fall of 1620. While the venture proved to be quite unsatisfactory for the young artist, he did, during the few months in which he was in England, receive some important commissions and he established contacts with the most important collectors in the country. Van Dyck returned to Antwerp in February 1621 and remained there for eight months and then moved to Italy. It was again probably Rubens who advised van Dyck to go to Italy, for Rubens had enjoyed a most successful period of study and work there in the first decade of the century.

While the work of the young van Dyck and that of Rubens are in many ways similar, there are distinct differences which are the result of the young artist's preferences in painting. Van Dyck was no mere imitator of Rubens. He was always more concerned with the surface of his canvases than with the elder master. He could not fully accept Rubens' emphasis on the dramatic spatial recession of composition. Van Dyck was indeed a "painters' painter." This is quite consistent with his enthusiasm for the art of Titian and other masters of the Venetian Renaissance.

Van Dyck's youthful works, because they are such extraordinarily mature, visually exciting creations, deserve attention, for their power to delight the eye has not diminished over the centuries. They are as vital and rejuvenating today as ever.

The exhibition The Young van Dyck will be shown at the National Gallery of Canada from September 19 to November 9, 1980. It is one of a series of special exhibitions which celebrate the centennial of the National Gallery of Canada.

The Arrest of Christ is also a work which obtains its strength from the hasty application of paint. The flickering light of the torch illuminates a small seething crowd of hostile humans led by the traitor Judas. The drama culminates in the passive figure of Christ whose elongated and at rest position in a dark garden conveys a sense of peace and awaits the inevitable. The tortured combat of Peter and Malchus in the lower left adds yet more violence to the historical incident. The light and colour and, to a lesser extent, the composition owe much to van Dyck's clear understanding of the art of Titian. It was the brilliant combination of design and surface that attracted van Dyck throughout his life to the paintings of Titian.

Van Dyck's early drawings show his enthusiasm for Rubens and Titian. In a preparatory sketch for the Crowning with Thorns the young van Dyck combined some of the volumetric solidity of Rubens' style with a surface design not unlike that of Titian. For this composition van Dyck used Rubens' drawings for his interpretation of the subject and perhaps also had as a source a copy of Titian's famous painting on the same theme.
works is strictly controlled by the authorities of the country. These
two reasons explain in part why the place of oriental art is so limited
at the National Gallery and elsewhere in Canada. A third reason
arises from the fact that most Canadian universities have only lately
begun to study the art of China. But this is not true of other Western
countries, which, contrary, have developed their collections since the end of
the Second World War; they are often of high quality. It must be said that
they have immense funds available . . .

In Canada, except for the Royal Ontario Museum, whose collection
is famous, no other museum possesses a department of such value.
Much, therefore, remains to be done in this domain, not only
at the National Gallery, but also in the provinces and in the
universities of Canada. The Suma Collection, the important
donation made by Mr. Suma, Japanese artist, has demonstrated
the possibilities offered to us, as we shall see in a moment
— the Suma Collection is a magnificient example of the
possibilities offered to us, as we shall see in a moment — allow
us to remedy the most serious shortages. Just think! Our budget has
not changed in six years! But you know, as I do, the magnitude of the
present crisis. This having been said, let us consider the
Suma Collection and oriental art, of course, which difficult in the latter
case on account of the lack of funds. Fortunately, travelling exhibitions
and loans — the Suma Collection is a magnificient example of the
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The Suma Collection

A.M. — Could you show us this collection that holds a unique place in
the evolution of modern Chinese painting?

H.Y.S. — The exhibition comprises more than eighty scrolls by con-
temporary Chinese artists; they belong to Mr. Suma, Japanese ambassa-
dor to Canada. The diversity of works and styles allows us to
divide the collection into four parts: A) Modernism in the great tradi-
tion; B) Orientalism; C) Modernism in the great tradition; D) The
Suma Collection. The Suma Collection comprises, among many other
pieces, four scrolls by Chen Zhifu, contemporary Chinese artist; they
belong to Mr. Suma, Japanese artist. The exhibition comprises more than
eighty scrolls by contemporary Chinese artists. The exhibition comprises
more than eighty scrolls by contemporary Chinese artists.

H.Y.S. — The first work you mentioned, that of Xu Gu, offers a very
important work of your collection?

A.M. — Among the works of the painters who studied abroad, I prefer-
Red Dancing Woman (1933) by Liu Haisu, a sketch full of movement,
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...ON THE WAY

By François-Marc GAGNON

Of all the aspects of the National Gallery's collection, one of the most difficult, if it is not that of completing it (one never comes to an end in collecting), at least of making it representative of reality, is the foreign contemporary art sector. How can one give, even if only an idea, of the complexity of contemporary art without a typical fauve or cubist painting, without a Russian constructivist work, without some surrealist works, etc.? Even the sector of contemporary American art cannot claim representativeness without a certain number of names and pictures.

Thus it is with great joy that we learn that the National Gallery has just acquired a painting by Barnett Newman titled The Way I. If the Gallery has now succeeded, for the last ten years, in following the American art trends, it faces quite another problem when catching up with older periods involved. Pictures are then much more rare, more expensive and more sought-after all over the world by rival institutions. The Gallery already owned a unique Jackson Pollock, the famous Number 29 which Pollock painted on glass on occasion of the short film (ten minutes) that Hans Namuth and Paul Falkenberg produced on this artist and his work at the end of 1950 and the beginning of 1951. But Barnett Newman was not represented there by a painting. This lack was a serious one because it deprived us of a prototypical work which has had, in Canada as elsewhere, an altogether preponderant influence. We are indebted to the contacts of Brydon Smith, the then curator of foreign contemporary art, and of Thomas B. Hess, to bring about this purchase. A decision that was taken preponderantly due to his perspicacity in having made possible the acquisition of this painting. May he find here the expression of our gratitude for his work.

Signed and dated below on the left: Barnett Newman 1951. The Way I is a picture of modest dimensions (101.6 by 76.2 cm; approximately 40 inches by 30) and austere colours: dark red at the centre, blackish on the periphery. The black seems to have been painted at two times: a brilliant black background first, then a flat dark greenish coat, but uneven and showing in places the lower layer. The red of the central area is restrained and does not really separate this central area from a background. We have, rather, the impression of three juxtaposed vertical areas. As the painting does not resort to hard edge technique, we feel the hesitation of the hand in the meeting of the two lateral areas with the central one.

This painting now occupies a wall on the second storey of the Gallery. It is placed close to Jackson Pollock's Number 29 (1950) and Clyfford Still's 1949 G (1949), oddly in colours that bring to mind those of Barnett Newman. This arrangement is not by chance. It well indicates the place which, in curator Brydon Smith's mind, Newman's painting occupies in the Gallery's contemporary art collection. As a matter of fact, with the acquisition of the Newman one might say that the National Gallery has just filled one of the most important gaps in its collection regarding the representation of great trends in contemporary American painting. The Pollock marked one of its poles; the Newman reveals the other, and at the same time the Clyfford Still and the Arshile Gorky (Charred Beloved II, 1946) take on all their meaning.

The modesty of the dimensions of Newman's painting should not lead us to think it of little importance. According to Newman himself, The Way I is the first example of a picture in which he had given up zip, the divisions of the pictorial area by narrow vertical bands, to replace them with equal elements, a decision that was going to have great importance for the rest of his work. Indeed, The Way I followed in small sizes. Also as always, they are unconsciously anticipated in an earlier painting. In the series of narrow pictures of 1950 that immediately prepare for The Wild (1950); oil on canvas; 95% in. by 11 1/4; Mt. Royal College (the fourth in this series, in T. Hess' classification; 74" by 6") in which the central band is twice as wide as the peripheral ones, according to the plan 1/4-1/2-1/4, exactly what would appear the following year in The Way I, but in quite another size.2

By suggesting that The Way I is situated chronologically between Cathedra (1951; oil and magma on canvas; 96" by 79"; Annalee Newman Coll., N.Y.) and Achilles (1952; oil on canvas; 11" by 50"; Jaime C. Del Almo Coll., L.A.) zip has given way, either to a central area in the first or to a division into two areas corresponding to 1/2 and 3/4 of the total surface of the painting in the second. Prometheus Bound (1952; oil on canvas; 11" by 50"; Private collection, N.Y.) goes still further, since the picture consists of only one pictorial area stopping just before touching the bottom of the picture. In a certain fashion The Way I shows the course that subsequent paintings will take.

But it shows this in another manner, revealed by Thomas B. Hess' subtle exogesis. According to him, one would find in some of Newman's paintings allusions to the Jewish mystique. Thus, in spite of its Latin title, Cathedra would allude to the theme of the Throne that, in the Bible, designates the place (ha makom) of the divine revelation. In this painting, the place is represented by the perfect square that appears somewhat misplaced on the right between two vertical zips. Very conscious of divine transcendence, the Jewish mystique does not aspire to the unio Deo (communion with God) like that of the Christians. It aspires to being able only to stand at the door (The Gate is also the title of a 1954 painting by Newman), while veiling its face in front of the Presence. The experience is not without danger, for it is said that one cannot see God without dying. This does not make it less fascinating. Further, it is necessary to find the path that leads to the door from which one can contemplate the place (ha makom). The furnace red of the central area in The Way I could not better signify this ambivalence of the road that leads to God. The seeker of God can entirely burn away there.

This exegesis seems to us to illuminate the picture from the interior as much as it seems to us necessary that it be pursued to explain the coherence of the whole in Newman's themes. Why is The Way I followed by Achilles, who, after all, is only a Greek hero? Newman has said that, in this picture, the red central area is Achilles' shield, the extraordinary work of art forged by Hephaestus which Homer described in detail. Like the Jewish mystique, Achilles goes forward on the path of danger, since he is preparing for battle. Is this not true also of Ulysses, whom his long and complicated journey led to places more and more dangerous as much for the soul as for the body? But the theme of Achilles reveals another dimension to us. The Greek hero is covering himself with a finely sculpted shield, therefore with a work of art. And so, when Newman goes to the sources of the Jewish mystique as to those of Greek mythology, it is less for themselves that he does this. Rather, he seeks there metaphors of the aesthetic creation and of the destiny of the modern artist. Like his old imitators, Newman was trying to penetrate into the depths of the human psyche, but could reach them only by signs and forms and, therefore, as through a veil.


(Translation by Mildred Grand)

WROUGHT IRON COOKING AND FIREPLACE UTENSILS

By Richard J. WATTENMAKER

In the Winter 1971-72 issue of Vie des Arts one appeared an article on the acquisition by the Macdonald Stewart Foundation of a collection of approximately two thousand wrought iron utensils assembled by and formerly belonging to M. Hotermans in Paris. A portion of this extraordinary resource was first exhibited in 1971 at the Gallerie des Arts, 3, Champs Elysées. It was subsequently fully installed in the Montreal Military and Maritime Museum, Ile Ste-Hélène. In 1975, the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, organized a travelling exhibition of sixty-three pieces selected from the reserve collection, tapping only a small number of the remaining treasures of the Macdonald Stewart Collection.
A considerable number of objects in this collection served as points of reference and study by a brilliant and dedicated French scholar-teachers, Raymond Lecoq (1913-1971). Professor Lecoq, beginning in 1950, devoted two decades to research on all the various types of household objects made of iron and had completed, just in time for his untimely death, a compendium of technical expertise - Le Forgeron et le ferblantier - that comprehensively on the history and development of wrought iron in France from its Gallo-Roman origins to the early part of the nineteenth century.

Madame Lecoq, the author's highly knowledgeable aide in his investigations, was able to arrange for the publication of the first of these two volumes, Serrurerie Ancienne: Techniques et œuvres, in 1973. Complications over its distribution kept the comprehensive study out of general circulation until 1978 when it began to receive deserved acclaim for its distinguished scholarship. For example, the Bulletin de la Société des Amis de la Bibliothèque Forney (Paris) in April 1978 described Serrurerie Ancienne as a "texte d'une grande qualité pédagogique...une véritable synthèse des réalisations des maîtres d'œuvres depuis l'âge du fer." M. Lecoq réussi a un exploit rare: sa connaissance et ses découvertes, largement inconnues jusqu'à ce jour, ont été publiées sous sa plume.

Lecoq's work thus creatively builds upon and extends the great tradition of such 19th century studies as Arthur Trelfailey, Forgeron de village and Le Forgeron et le ferblantier, which would not have been possible without the earlier work that had already been done. Lecoq illustrates in both drawings and photographs, more than seventy-five examples which are now in Montreal, discussing many of these objects in the text. His book has a special attraction for Canadians above and beyond the growing worldwide interest in understanding the everyday practical activities of life in the common man in earlier times. It is to this very end that such recent studies as Arthur Trelfailey, Forgeron de village and Le Forgeron et le ferblantier have been directed and published in Québec.

The Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires in Paris has provided an important center for similar approaches to the study of French culture. Suzanne Tardieu, maître de recherche au Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and herself the author of important studies of this type, has written of the author in her preface to Les Objets de la vie domestique: "Je sailed the souvenirs of the esprit du ouvert, curieux, de ce travailleur soigné qui, patiemment, réunissait tout ce qui — et même au delà — était l'objet de ses préoccupations. Il accumulait les faits, il entassait les références. Rien ne lui paraissait étranger à son domaine... Il exploitait toutes les sources possibles... il cernait tout les travaux qui pouvaient avoir été écrits sur les objets de métal.

Les Objets de la vie domestique comprises thirty chapters divided into five main sections of differing length: Généralités; Production du feu; L'Aménagement; La cuisine; L'Eclairage. Tracing the history of fireplaces and kitchens from prehistoric times, the author marshals evidence and draws conclusions about the life of the common man in earlier times. It is to this very end that such recent studies as Arthur Trelfailey, Forgeron de village and Le Forgeron et le ferblantier have been directed and published in Québec.

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passionate quest to learn and transmit the secrets of these utensils. Being unemotional, he was ever-conscious that the objects exemplify facets of creativity as surely as do any other products and that we may gain through their study is more than mere anthropological facts but truly a special appreciation of the psychology and culture of our ancestors. The gentle intensity, conviction of purpose and insight with which Raymond Lecoq pursued his investigations resulted in a solid achievement which has enriched the fund of knowledge for students and scholars alike in many fields.


**BILL FEATHERSTON’S RECENT PAINTINGS: THE MACHO-MYTHOLOGY**

By Arthur PERRY

The millworkers in Squamish, B.C., are a tough, fun-loving lot. Much of their entertainment is both physical and violent: it can entail the purposeful demolition of their cars, or the brawling, teeth-loosening contact of non-professional hockey. Their world is one built on the macho-myth, on brute strength, and on all-male bull-aggression.

Squamish is a small town that is kept going by its pulp mill. The forty-mile drive from Vancouver envelopes the viewer in one of Canada’s most spectacular stretches of expansive coastal cliffs and dotted gulf islands. Driving the long sloping descent into Squamish towards the climbing columns of mill smoke is an unparalleled vista of sea and rugged West Coast landscape.

The town itself reflects the mill and its workers: small wood-frame houses, a pool hall and the central drinking spot, The Chieftain. The cars in Squamish belong to the pre-energy crisis period — Cadillacs, Buicks, Meteors — the heavy American beasts of muchacho metal. They’re old too, usually from the mid and late sixties. Yet all are kept spotless with continual body work and engine know-how.

Another notable point of Squamish is its large number of heavily chromed motorcycles; Harleys and Triumphs are everywhere. The overall feel to Squamish’s physicality is one of brute strength and powerful streetwear. It’s no place for introversion or weakness.

Bill Featherston has lived in Squamish for more than two decades of years now. As a fine art painter, Featherston has his studios in the pool hall and The Chieftain bar. Yet Featherston’s image has never been one of an aesthete. His presence and manner is pure mill town. It has taken Featherston over half a century to cultivate the gruff hard-nosed persona he carries around, and only in Squamish could he really expect to give it full breathing room.

The mill workers are Featherston’s people. Back-slaping, swearing, and continually drinking beer, Featherston has become as much a part of Squamish as its famed sandy-coloured stone used for West Vancouver fireplaces. As mentioned, the mill workers enjoy themselves by being tough, and one of their eccentric means of venting their mill-fever is to don the role of bikers: they become the Squamish Tribesmen, an organized gang of romantically-minded meanies who imitate the American biker prototype. It’s a violent outburst of aggressive energy with which they build up a peer structure of power and fear.

In his exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery (April 20 to June 3, 1979), Bill Featherston presents a number of large canvases dealing with the mill workers’ multi-lives. In works such as Les Enfants au Paradis, 1979, we see the candid view of a Tribesmen as he downs a canned beer amidst a gaggle of motorcycle chrome on a California desert. In this work, any sense of power is arrested. The bikes rest idly against the open landscape. What Featherston does, and does so well, is to humanize the social façades built up around people. In other words, we see the Tribesmen in this painting as an ’enfant’, as a child playing at being tough. This is not a moment of violence, even if the skull logos on the heavy bikes point in that direction. What Featherston’s art is attempting to show in all his views of the Squamish workers is their assumed mythic rôle and their tough-guy affectations. The Tribesmen are not shown as romantic heroes or malicious villains, but rather they are seen as merely temporary toughies in the rôle of bikers.

The same is true for Featherston’s series of Demo Derby paintings. These same mill workers, when not biking their way into America, are rushing into each other in gaudy painted cars. The fascination of these men is their rôle shifting. At one time they will deck themselves out with horrific skull insignia, at another time they will climb into cars painted with images of Cap’n Crunch or Loony Bird cartoons, and at still another time they will put on hockey uniforms at two o’clock in the morning and attack each other with sticks and flying elbows. Their lives are a series of segmented lives, all of which are masquerades for brutal warfare in the name of entertainment.

Featherston’s paintings of half-crazed mill workers racing around a dirt track with steel I-beams welded to their doors and chains holding down their trunks are paintings of action, compared to his Tribesmen paintings that are paintings of introspection and thoughtful silences. The Tribesmen paintings expose the human side of the tough-guy rôle of Marlon Brando’s Wild One, while the Demo Derby paintings point to the aggressive gladiator spirit of Charlton Heston’s Ben Hur: both roles are macho, and both roles allow the protagonists to prove their virile lust for danger and excitement.

Featherston views the powerful playfulness of these men as equivalent to the force and aggression shown in Norman Jewison’s Rollerball. Like the players in Rollerball, when the mill workers get into uniform (hockey, biker or the dirt track variety), they become instantly mean. The game becomes a patsy for the violence. Featherston’s hockey paintings are clutterings of uniforms and bodily contact: they are not single heroic acts. Unlike Ken Danby’s famed In the Grease (from which Featherston lifted the title for his own hockey paintings), Featherston is not into romanticizing or creating Canadian icons. His desire is to capture some of the sloppy unprofessional exuberance that goes under the name of hockey in the early morning hours at Squamish.

Being a mill town, Squamish loves its logs. The demo-derby’s track is ringed with logs and sawdust fills the track. It is the logging festival, and the mill workers give their best chance to affirm their self-esteem as productive workers. The earthy garage men of this logging game are macho, and both roles are seen as merely temporary masquerades for brutal warfare in the name of entertainment.

In the logging world is a man of mystic proportions. His name in Ron Hartell. Hartell is the undisputed master of the axe. Everyone in the small B.C. towns such as Campbell River, Quesnel, Sooke and Squamish knows his name. The man who can unroll a forty-five mile drive from Vancouver envelopes the viewer in one of Canada’s most spectacular stretches of expansive coastal cliffs and dotted gulf islands. Driving the long sloping descent into Squamish towards the climbing columns of mill smoke is an unparalleled vista of sea and rugged West Coast landscape. Jews are seen by the players in Rollerball, when the mill workers get into uniform (hockey, biker or the dirt track variety), they become instantly mean. The game becomes a patsy for the violence. Featherston’s hockey paintings are clutterings of uniforms and bodily contact: they are not single heroic acts. Unlike Ken Danby’s famed In the Grease (from which Featherston lifted the title for his own hockey paintings), Featherston is not into romanticizing or creating Canadian icons. His desire is to capture some of the sloppy unprofessional exuberance that goes under the name of hockey in the early morning hours at Squamish.

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